

## Meet Your Conference Plenary Speakers

In anticipation of the biennial meeting, June 2-4, 2011 at the Catamaran Resort in San Diego, CA we'll be bringing you some information about our distinguished plenary speakers. Watch your email inbox for future editions!



### For more information

- [Steven's Handbook of Experimental Psychology](#)
- [Chronicle of Higher Education article featuring Dr. Pashler's critique of learning styles](#)
- [Dr. Pashler's Laboratory Page](#)
- [Demonstrations from Dr. Pashler's Lab](#)

### Meet Hal Pashler

Dr. Pashler is currently Professor of Psychology at the University of California, San Diego. His undergraduate degree is from Brown University, where he studied logic, philosophy of science, and psychology. He received his PhD in Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania in 1985. Dr. Pashler has received numerous honors for his work, including being elected as a fellow in the American Psychological Society and the Society for Experimental Psychology. He was also the 1999 winner of the Troland Award from the National Academy of Sciences, and edited the massive 3rd edition of the venerable *Steven's Handbook of Experimental Psychology*.

### Dr. Pashler's work

During the first fifteen years of his career Dr. Pashler became known as one of the premier researchers of attention in the world, encompassing topics in visual search, perception, and especially multi-tasking. In the early 2000's Dr. Pashler began to explore memory. Much of his work has focused on how to maximize memory efficiency, in the classroom and elsewhere.

## Interview

**IMBES:** *Dr. Pashler, can you give us a quick preview of what you plan to talk about at the conference?*

**HP:** I will be discussing recent work on concrete methods of enhancing learning and retention of knowledge. Our focus is on the question of what kind of learning procedures, and what kind of timing, produces the most efficient learning and slows the rate of forgetting.

**IMBES:** *What sorts of tangible technologies and tools do you see emerging from work on spacing and testing effects?*

**HP:** Currently in fields that require learning a lot of factual knowledge, from history to biology to earth science, students generally study by re-reading a textbook (and possibly highlighting parts of the text.) For reasons I will be discussing in my talk, this is a very deficient sort of review. I foresee that online review technologies will emerge and become commonplace in the next ten years or so. Optimally, these technologies should not only provide the learner with the opportunity to retrieve information rather than just rereading--but in addition may even keep track of the student's performance and arrange near-optimal timing for reviews to promote learning. The tricky thing here is that the sort of choices that would optimize a student's learning for the final exam will often be very different than the choices that would optimize long-term retention. It will be interesting to see how this potential conflict is sorted out in the marketplace.

**IMBES:** *You were a strictly a research cognitive psychologist for a long time. . .how did you get interested in educational applications of your work?*

**HP:** Up until about 10 years ago, most of my research was on attention, and my interests were pretty much purely theoretical. Nonetheless, for some reason I thought at the time that it would be fun to try to write a paper on the question "What concrete and nonobvious advice does experimental psychology offer that can help people involved in instruction and training?". It was easy to find lots of intriguing suggestions about ideas that might be helpful, but as I started reviewing the literature, I was startled to find that in almost no cases was the research base adequate to support very strong advice. Usually the tasks, the time delays, and so forth used in studies in this area were far too unrealistic to give one confidence about making specific practical recommendations. At that point, I started doing a few studies to help fill the gap--using more realistic materials and meaningful time intervals than had been common in the cognitive psychology literature. A couple years later, Russ Whitehurst's reforms at the Institute of Education Sciences provided resources to allow my lab--and others around the country, such as Roddy Roediger's lab at Washington University and Bob Bjork's lab at UCLA--to begin making a serious effort to answer some of the many neglected questions in this area.

***Dr. Pashler's talk, "Testing and Spacing Effects: Improving the Efficiency of Learning," will be Friday morning, June 3rd at 8:30 a.m.***

### IMPORTANT DATES

**April 1:** Deadline for submission to present at the IMBES conference. IMBES encourages presentation of both scientific evidence that informs education and of experience with educational practice based on evidence-based curricula and instruction. You will hear a decision about your submission by April 17.

**April 22:** Early bird registration deadline for the conference.

[Click here for more conference information.](#)